REPORT OF
The Committee on Commissions

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National Council of the Congregational Churches
Springfield, Mass.

The "Commission on Missions" is a permanent Commission and does not come under the survey of this report.

All the other Commissions, according to the Constitution expire at the end of each biennium and it is for each Council to determine what Commissions it needs for the next biennium. In every period there have been some Commissions that failed to function satisfactorily. Several causes contribute to this result: (1) The members of a Commission are so widely scattered that attendance at a meeting would take from one to ten days of time for each man; (2) their traveling expenses would be far above any funds available for this purpose, and there is no money for investigation or experimentation.

The result is that commissions rarely are able to have satisfactory meetings; some never meet from one biennial to the next, and the sole accomplishment of some is to make a report for the next Council.

Another difficulty is that sometimes commissions overlap.

Sometimes also they are appointed impulsively and are not given a definite sphere of action. If we are to have commissions an effective part of our system, some radical changes must be made.

Many feel that we should eliminate all commissions that have fields of labor which are being cultivated by the Societies. The Societies are agents of this Council. Why appoint other agents to do the same things?

(1) We recommend that each Commission consist of active members and corresponding members. The active members shall constitute one-fourth and shall reside within a short distance of some Congregational center, that they may have several meetings without too great an expenditure of time and money. They shall present by mail to the corresponding members, who shall reside in different parts of the country, the main points at issue, and shall take final action after the replies received have been considered.

The Commissions shall ordinarily consist of twenty-four members, six active and eighteen corresponding members.

(2) We recommend that the Commission on Polity be discontinued and its duties transferred to the Executive Committee of the National Council.

(3) That the Commissions on "Co-operation with Foreign-speaking Churches," on "Inter-racial Co-operation" and the "Near East Relief" be merged into one, designated as the Commission on "International and Inter-racial Relations."

(4) That the title of the Commission on "Comity, Federation and Unity" be changed to "Inter-Church Relations."

(5) That the Commissions on "Recruiting of the Ministry," and on "Religious and Moral Education," which are associated with the Education Society, which is working along these lines, be discontinued. If after two years it shall appear to the Education Society, or others, that this is a mistake, and they are needed, this action can be rescinded and the Commissions restored.

(6) That the "Men's Work Commission" be merged with the "Social Service Commission," and that to them be committed also the survey of the country church and agricultural life problems, these added features to receive equal consideration, with the others.

(7) That the designation of the "Temperance" Commission be changed to "Law Enforcement."

(8) That the Pilgrim Memorial Commission be discontinued as requested; and also the Commission on the Status of the Ministry, which has accomplished it work and functions with the Commission on Recruiting the Ministry.

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